

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 190543Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8700

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4695

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN INTERNAL SECURITY

1. SYRIAN PRIVATE BUSINESSMAN, A SUNNI WHO HAS FURNISHED RELIABLE INFORMATION IN THE PAST ABOUT HIS CONTACTS WITH THE PRESIDENT AND KEY OFFICIALS OF SYRIAN SECURITY APPARATUS, GAVE US FOLLOWING OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT INTERNAL SECURITY SCENE JULY 17.

2. IZZAWI ASSASSINATION:

SOURCE HAS DISCUSSED THIS ASSASSINATION WITH BRIGADIER ADNAN DABBAGH, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERNAL SECURITY COUNTRY WIDE. DABBAGH'S APPRECIATION IS THAT BOMB IN IZZAWI'S OFFICE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PLANTED BY A LOW LEVEL AGENT. HIS INVESTIGATION ACCORDINGLY COVERS EVEN SENIOR BAATH PARTY OFFICIALS IN BOTH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMANDS WITH LINKS TO BAGHDAD. AS SOURCE REMARKED, DABBAGH HAS EXTRA INCENTIVE BECAUSE HE SUSPECTS IF HE DOES NOT FIND THE PERPETRATOR FIRST THE NEXT BOMB COULD BE UNDER HIS OWN DESK.

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3. HAMA ASSASSINATION:

APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK AGO AN UNKNOWN ASSAILANT ASSASSINATED THE DIRECTOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF HAMA. THE VICTIM'S TITLE WAS MISLEADING, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, SINCE HE WAS ACTUALLY THE PRINCIPAL POWER IN HAMA PROVINCE BUT ALWAYS WAS CAREFUL TO PLAY A BACKSTAGE ROLE. HE WAS AN ALAWITE, RELATED BY MARRIAGE TO CHIEF OF POLITICAL BUREAU OF MILITARY, MAJOR GENERAL ABDUL GHANI IBRAHIM.

4. ADDRESSING THE QUESTION AS TO WHY HAMA SEEMED TO FIGURE SO FREQUENTLY AS THE CENTER OF ANTI-REGIME VIOLENCE IN SYRIA, SOURCE NOTED THAT HAMA HAS THE MOST EXTENSIVE WEB OF CONTACTS WITH IRAQ OF ANY SYRIAN CITY. ITS TIES WITH BAGHDAD GO BACK THROUGH THE CENTURIES; THE PRINCIPAL MERCHANTS OF HAMA HAVE OWNED LARGE HERDS OF SHEEP WHOSE GRAZING AREAS OVERLAP THE IRAQI-SYRIAN FRONTIERS. GIVEN HAMA'S UNIQUELY POWERFUL ELEMENTS OF EXTREME RIGHTISTS AND LEFTISTS, BOTH OF WHOM HARBOR HATRED FOR ASAD'S REGIME, IT IS NOT KNOWN WHICH PARTY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR LATEST ASSASSINATION. IN FACT, SOURCE ADDED, THOSE GUILTY OF THE MURDER OF HAMA'S SECURITY CHIEF LAST FEBRUARY HAVE YET TO BE IDENTIFIED.

5. ALEPPO:

SYRIA'S NORTHERN CENTER UNTIL LAST WEEK HAD BEEN QUIET SINCE A SMALL BOMB EXPLODED HARLESSLY MAY 1 JUST AS DEPUTY SEC GEN OF BAATH NATIONAL COMMAND AHMAD BAJBUJ LAUNCHED INTO HIS SPEECH. LAST WEEK A TIME BOMB WAS DISCOVERED INSIDE A SAMSONITE CASE IN THE WASHROOM OF THE BAATH PARTY HEAD-QUARTERS IN DOWNTOWN ALEPPO. IT WAS SET TO GO OFF IN THE EARLY EVENING AND SINCE THE POLICE WERE UNABLE TO DEFUSE IT, THE CASE WAS CARRIED OUTSIDE OF TOWN WHERE IT EXPLODED.

6. SOURCE HAD HEARD BUT COULD NOT VOUCH FOR THE REPORT OF A SMALL DEMONSTRATION WITH ANTI-REGIME OVERTONES IN TARTOUS LAST WEEK. OTHERWISE THE COASTAL AREA HAS BEEN QUIET INCLUDING BANIAS AND LATTAKIS, AS HAVE BEEN HOMS AND THE JEBEL DRUZE. SOURCE WAS CATEGORICAL IN ANSWERING OUR QUESTION ABOUT THE LATTER, ASSERTING THE FALSEHOOD OF THE MANY RUMORS EMANATING

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FROM BAGHDAD AND JUMBLATT ABOUT ANTI-ASAD MOVEMENTS AMONG SYRIA'S DRUZE.

MURPHY

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